

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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FM USINT BAGHDAD
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INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0383

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PROP, PEPR, PLAB, XF, IZ
SUBJECT: MORE IRAQI WALKOUTS

1. SUMMMARY: ANGRY IRAQI WALKOUTS FROM ICATU CONFERENCE
IN KUWAIT AND ARAB WOMENS CONFERENCE IN TRIPOLI BURNISH
IRAQ'S REPUTATION AS SOREHEAD OF ARAB WORLD. IMPRESSION
IS GROWING THAT IRAQIS ARE UNWILLING TO TAKE PART IN PAN-
ARAB POLITICAL GAME UNLESS OTHER PLAYERS ABIDE BY IRAQI
RULES. END SUMMARY.

2. IRAQI MEDIA CONTINUE RATHER PATHETIC EFFORTS TO JUSTIFY
FEBRUARY 15 IRAQI WALKOUT FROM ICATU CONFERENCE IN KUWAIT.
LINE THAT ATTITUDE OF SOME DELEGATIONS WAS INCONSISTENT
WITH INTERESTS OF ARAB WORKING CLASS WAS MERE RHETORICAL
PERSIFLAGE. ONE REAL ISSUE WAS IRAQI DISPLEASURE THAT
ICATU WOULD NOT CONDEMN "THE SYRIAN REGIME FOR THE
LIQUIDATIONIST POLICY IT HAD BEEN PURSUING IN REGARD TO
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THE PALESTINE CAUSE." WE SUSPECT THAT ANOTHER GRIEVANCE
WAS RELUCTANCE OF OTHER ARABS TO ACCEPT IRAQI BID TO
PERMANENTLY LOCATE ICATU HEADQUARTERS IN BAGHDAD. FACT
THAT IRAQI WALKOUT WAS LED BY MUHAMMAD AYESH, WHO IS MEMBER
OF REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND COUNCIL AS WELL AS HEAD OF
IRAQI TRADE UNION FEDERATION GAVE OFFICIAL CHARACTER TO
DELEGATION'S ACTION.

3. INTERESTINGLY, LOCAL MEDIA HAVE NOT REPORTED EGYPTIAN WALKOUT, PERHAPS EMBARRASSED THAT IRAQ WAS ONCE AGAIN ISOLATED FROM ANTI-SADAT FORCES. MEDIA QUOTES ICATU SYG ALI AL-MAWLA (SCI) AS BLAMING SYRIA FOR BREAKDOWN OF MEETING. THEY FEATURE HIS STATEMENT THAT WALKOUT OF FIVE (UNNAMED) DELEGATIONS ILLUSTRATED REJECTION OF THE PRACTICES OF THE SYRIAN DELEGATES. MAWLA STATES THAT HE HAS INITIATED CONTACTS FROM HIS TEMPORARY BASE IN BAGHDAD TO CONVENE AN ICATU ORDINARY SESSION IN MARCH IN "A MORE ACCOMMODATING CLIMATE."

4. MEANWHILE, THE GENERAL FEDERATION OF IRAQI WOMEN STAGED WALKOUT FROM ARAB WOMEN'S CONFERENCE IN TRIPOLI ON FEBRUARY 17. MRS. MANAL YOUNIS, HEAD OF THE IRAQI WOMEN'S MOVEMENT, BLAMED SURPRISES SPRUNG BY THE CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS. AS AN EXAMPLE, SHE CITED THE AGENDA FOR THE MEETING OF THE STANDING BUREAU OF THE GENERAL FEDERATION OF ARAB WOMEN, ADOPTED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE IRAQI DELEGATION. MRS. YOUNIS CONCLUDED, "HISTORY WILL PROVE THAT IRAQ WILL ALWAYS REMAIN THE BEATING HEART OF THE ARAB NATION AND THE REFLECTOR OF ITS ASPIRATIONS."

5. COMMENT: LATEST IRAQI ACTIONS FIT PATTERN WHICH STARTED WITH WALKOUT FROM TRIPOLI STEADFASTNESS SUMMIT OF LAST DECEMBER. IRAQI DELEGATES, OFTEN FROM THE POLITICAL CONFIDENTIAL

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LEADERSHIP, APPEAR TO HAVE INFLEXIBLE INSTRUCTIONS WHICH GOVERN THEIR BEHAVIOR. IF THE OTHER CONFEREES WILL NOT ACCEPT IRAQI POSITIONS, ESPECIALLY THE REJECTION OF ALL MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT EFFORTS, THERE IS NO FALLBACK POSITION.

6. THERE ARE ALSO INDICATIONS THAT REGIME IS DISAPPOINTED THAT ITS OWN OFFERS TO HOST CONFERENCES FIND FEW TAKERS. IT APPEARS THAT IRAQIS EXPECTED THAT ONE RESULT OF ANTI-SADAT REACTIONS WOULD BE TO ENHANCE BAGHDAD'S CLAIM AS AN ALTERNATIVE CAPITAL OF THE PAN-ARAB MOVEMENT. THAT THESE EXPECTATIONS WERE UNREALISTIC SHOULD HAVE BEEN PVIOUS FROM THE START. BAGHDAD, AS A CITY AND AS A POLITICAL CENTER, IS NO MATCH FOR CAIRO. NONETHELESS, THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE IRAQI VERSION OF THE BAATH PARTY DIE HARD. IMPRESSION IS GROWING THAT IRAQI LEADERSHIP IS UNWILLING TO PLAY IN PAN-ARAB POLITICAL GAME UNLESS OTHER PLAYERS ABIDE BY IRAQI RULES, CHOOSE AN IRAQI CAPTAIN AND SHOW UP IN BAGHDAD FOR THE BIG GAME.

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. INTERESTS: IT IS JUST AS WELL THAT IRAQI REGIME CONTINUES TO FOLLOW SUCH INFLEXIBLE AND

UNSPORTSMANLIKE TACTICS. IRAQI LEADERSHIP PF PAN-ARAB
MOVEMENT WOULD BE CALCULATED TO DISRUPT MANY OF THE POSI-
TIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. AS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY
NOTED, FOR EXAMPLE, RELOCATION TO BAGHDAD OF ICATU
HEADQUARTERS WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO U.S. INTERESTS.
THIS IS TRUE IN GENERAL FOR NONGOVERNMENTAL PAN-ARAB
ACTIVITIES WHICH BAGHDAD REGIME DESIRES TO USE AS
VEHICLES FOR ITS RADICAL POLITICAL POSTURING.
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